
Beauty and the Beast: Perception of Beauty for the Female Athlete

Sharon K. Stoll, Heather VanMullem,
Nicole Ballestero and Lisa Brown

Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.68946>

Abstract

This chapter is a discussion and reflection of how beauty is perceived through the lens of four different athletes over four different decades. Two basketball players, a gymnast and a skater, reflect on the language of their sport and how beauty is perceived and manipulated through language and coaching techniques. The experiences affect athletes over a lifetime, both positively and negatively.

Keywords: women, athletics, beauty

1. Introduction

When contacted about writing a chapter for the *Perception of Beauty*, I first thought that as a Sport Ethicist I probably had little to offer. But on further consideration, I realized that as a former athlete, there is much that needs to be said about how athletes perceive themselves as women and measure themselves by societal beauty standards in light of athletic participation. I was an athlete, albeit years ago, involved in sports in which “beauty” was sacrosanct. If an athlete was unattractive or did not appear beautiful, the athlete suffered and suffered much and often. I ice skated. I was a big girl—not just larger than most. A big girl as defined by being over 5 feet, 8 inches tall and weighing over 150 pounds. All of my peers were pixies—but I soldiered on because I loved the sport. Almost daily some comment was made about my size—the usual retorts were something like, “Man you are big for an ice skater?” “Aren’t you in the wrong sport, you should be playing ice hockey.” “You’re really pretty, but wow are you big, don’t you feel embarrassed being on the ice?” “Your thighs are huge—aren’t you self-conscious? Maybe you should lose some weight.” “How can you skate and do all the

jumps and turns being so big?" "An excellent skater but your body aesthetics detract from the performance."

The remarks came from various sources: other skaters, children skaters, parents of children skaters, coaches, instructors, and judges. Why did I stay in the sport? I was and continue to be an aggressive personality who is not easily swayed by words. The best reason though in staying with the sport was because I was a strong skater and the power of being a "strong skater" gives one not only physical strength but psychological strength. That to me was the real beauty of the sport. The perception of acceptable body size and physical beauty in my sport, however, overshadows everything that occurs within the sport and apparently lasts a lifetime.

Just last month, I was speaking at a regional sports conference, when a young woman researcher approached me. When I say young, I mean in her early thirties. Understand I am in my early seventies, so we are four decades apart but perhaps not so far apart after all. She had heard that one of the speakers had a former athletic career in skating. She said she knew who I was as soon as she saw me. Her direct quote, "Skaters all have the same look—the hair, the makeup, the nails, the carriage, you know, THE LOOK."

I know exactly what she meant—we do have THE LOOK. Unfortunately, THE LOOK probably is not the healthiest way to be. We, with THE LOOK, have paid dearly for THE LOOK—weekly weigh-ins, constant criticism of makeup, costume, body type, and then the aesthetics of the sporting experience as it is dissected and analyzed by judges. That experience has been with me for a lifetime—it is a memory filled with the tension between two realities: the love of the sport, the beauty of the sport, juxta positioned with the beast of the sport—the constant worry, criticism, and evaluation concerning "THE LOOK." When refined, this problem is greater than what occurs in my sport of figure skating—it is a problem that exists across the realm of women in sport and athletics.

For over 30 years, many academic and feminist writers have written of the perceived importance of female athlete beauty and the hegemonic practices to manipulate women to be beautiful [1–7]. That research is not an enjoyable read because of the oppressive subjugation of female athletes. Other research has argued that perhaps the former lines of research were mistaken or more importantly missed the true mark. Rather, it is argued, athletes are unlike other female populations and are not as affected by the need to be beautiful or see themselves as a "girlie girl." Adams et al. [8] found that high school athletes saw sports as "...the main vehicle by which they ... attained confidence, independence, assertiveness, and joy in the physicality of the body"

I believe that both arguments have validity. I see and hear the first line often. As a college professor who attends female athletic contests, I often hear male derogatory catcalls directed toward women participants. "Hey 18, What a dog, do you eat bones to keep you from being pretty?" "Nice ass, 21". "Number 8, bend over again—I have something to give you?" Interestingly, no security personnel ever reprimand the behavior. And fans are cruel—unbelievably cruel and words do have to mean [9]. I do not recall any of these remarks as positive about how these athletes look. Hegemony does still exist and is alive and well.

Because I teach sports ethics, gender equity is a subject that my classes continually discuss and study. I have spent a lifetime arguing, supporting, and writing about the rights of women to participate in sport [10, 11]. I have also studied the negative effect of competition in the sport on moral development and moral reasoning of both men and women [12–15]. Many times I have wondered if the day to day struggles concerning beauty, weight control, and participation of women involved in athletics are worth it. It seems to me that the strange tension between the beauty of the sport and the beast would affect athletes daily. With that being said, I wondered what other women athletes would say on this subject. Thus, I have asked three athletes of different age groups and different sports to share their stories.

Four former athletes from many different levels of competition, age groups, and sports experiences wanted their voices heard concerning the struggle of the female athlete and the beauty and the beast. However, as we moved forward on the project, I offered each of them authorship of this chapter. They agreed to authorship; they wanted their stories told, and they wanted to share their experience with the beauty and the beast. Hopefully, our captured perceptions give a vivid picture of “beauty” as an athlete sees herself as well as her depiction of the struggle with the beast within her sport. I knew that each of these women had a story to share, but did not realize the magnitude of the “beast’s” effect on them as people and women. Because of the nature of my and their reflections, they are co-authors for this chapter—they wanted their stories told.

2. Athlete of the current times

Nicole is a graduate student working as support staff with a women’s Division I basketball program. A 4-year collegiate athlete, she began playing basketball at the age of seven in the second grade and soon joined several AAU competitive leagues. She is a vibrant 24-year old who loves the game.

2.1. Nicole

When I played at USD, there was always an unspoken understanding that we as players were supposed to look a certain way. I remember hearing stories from the seniors my freshman year about how one of them stuck a weight down her pants during a weigh in because she knew she was not going to weigh enough. One of the seniors talked about how she had gained and lost so much weight she didn’t know what was normal for her body anymore. As basketball players, we needed to be muscular and “strong” so that we did not get shoved around, but we also couldn’t be too big because we needed to be able to get up and down the court. I never thought I would fall into this cycle but my sophomore year I fell into a weight obsession.

After an unsuccessful freshman year, I decided in my sophomore year to do whatever “it took” to play on the team. I was immediately told that to be considered as a viable player,

I would need to lose weight. I was put on a diet and specific workout regimen; I stuck to it because I wanted to play. After about 4 months of unhealthy eating patterns (skipping meals, drinking only weight loss shakes) combined with working out 3–4 times a day, I reached my goal. I was praised for all the hard work I had done and told how good I looked by my coaches, teammates, and even family. I associated the weight loss with beauty and success because that is the feedback I received from those around me. I also received more attention from men because of my new form and I thought this was the only way that I was going to receive this attention again. Unfortunately, my “hard work” did not translate into playing time. The criticism I received for being “overweight”, however, has stuck with me. I now only associate beauty with being fit and “in shape”- the supposed ideal I acquired during my sophomore year of college. My coaches instilled that in me because they were the ones to point out to me, the only way to be successful was to lose weight.

I have worked hard since those 2 years to change my perception of beauty and to see that starving myself and pushing my body past those limits, is not true beauty. However, it has been a long process and I still find myself comparing my current self to the way I was then.

3. Athlete of three decades ago

The second athlete is credentialed as a high school principal and participated in athletics during the 1980s. Her sport was both gymnastics and track and field. These two sports are at polar ends of the aesthetic perception of competition. Gymnastics, like ice skating, is a sport highly affected by the perceived beauty of the athlete and the aesthetic experience. The track, however, is based in being fleet of foot. Less weight is important because it is assumed one will run faster, but an athlete is not subjectively measured in track and field for beauty, but she is in gymnastics. In this case, Lisa is a petite woman and a very beautiful woman as measured by general beauty standards. However, apparently, she too suffered from the struggles with the perception of beauty.

3.1. Lisa

As a young girl, growing up and having an athletic build was a blessing and a challenge. I began taking gymnastics lessons at the age of 8 years old. I ran into trouble in high school when it became painfully clear that my appearance was very different than the majority of my female classmates. I had strong, muscular legs which, to my peers, appeared not to be feminine. I remember going clothes shopping as a freshman in high school and finding it difficult to find jeans that fit my small 5' 2" athletic frame- small waist and muscular thighs and strong powerful bottom. This trouble of finding flattering clothes was only one of several social snags as a female athlete.

The other girls in high school gave me grief for not looking feminine. When I wore a dress my muscular calves stuck out below the hem and the calves, to them, were reminiscent of an adolescent boy. I overheard girls whispering in class about how big my thighs were and how “gross” they were to look at. Being in high school in the 80's did not lend itself to embracing

my type of body profile. Julia Roberts was one of Hollywood's "it" girls and my body was a far cry from her tall, slender frame.

A short time later, I recall being asked by a relative if the coaches gave gymnasts special pills to keep us small for competition. I had to explain to this grown man that, "No, we were not given special pills" and that the girls who reach the higher echelon of competition in gymnastics were there based on their skill, not their body size.

My gymnastics "career" came to an end around that time. At the former gym, I was considered small, however, when I moved to a bigger gym to train, I was told that I had grown too tall and did not have the right look. My hair was layered and hard to pull into the preferred ponytail. I did not wear the most up-to-date gymnastic attire, my 34 B chest was too big, and at 5'2" I was taller than most of the gymnasts there. I decided to try a different sport and became a successful sprinter in track and field.

I always enjoyed the movement and strength that the sport of gymnastics brought to my life. It quickly became a large part of an identity that I happily embraced. It brought me years of enjoyment and satisfaction. While the negative sides of the sport were present, they did not dampen my enthusiasm for the sport.

Lisa left the sport because of "her size" and went on to be successful in track and field. Today, she still runs and is a healthy fit woman.

4. An athlete of two decades ago

Heather is an academic and department chair at a NAIA college. She played both high school and college sport and coached for several years. She teaches cultural aspects of sports and is versed in gender inequity scholarship. Heather's story is very different and more poignant about the struggles that women endure in a hyper-sexualized world of athletics.

4.1. Heather

"Nice legs," the point guard said as I waited for him to check the ball. "Excuse me?" I replied. I stood up out of my defensive stance and looked at him with a puzzled look on my face. I glanced at my bruised thighs and shins, discolored by diving on the floor after loose balls, running into the knees of opponents when fighting through screens, or bumping into free weights while negotiating a crowded weight room. I was dumbfounded by his comment. My legs were not "nice looking" legs. They were certainly colorful, sweaty, and muscular, but not "nice looking". "Who is this idiot?" was all I could think. I thought we were here to play basketball, not pick up a date.

"Are you going to play ball, or not?" I spat out.

"I'll make you a deal," he replied. With a stupid grin on his face, he continued, "I'll check the ball if you'll go out with me." I could hear the guys behind me snickering, waiting for me to say or do something.

Completely embarrassed by this awkward conversation and just wanting it to end, I let out a sigh, shrugged my shoulders, and said, "Fine ... now check the damn ball."

Being the object of someone's gaze, whether a man's or a woman's, was a part of my experience as a competitive athlete. The competitive athlete relies on her body to excel, much like a construction worker relies on his/her tools to build quality materials. For me, as a basketball player, I needed to be strong, lean, and quick. In order to perform, I needed the right combination of tools at the right time. This required careful attention to nutrition and physical fitness. Hours lifting in the weight room, seemingly endless sprints on the track, bounding up flights and flights of stairs, engaging in dribbling drills repetitively until my fingers ached, and putting up hundreds of shots a day were essential to being well prepared for successful competition. This devotion to effective preparation resulted in me being connected with my body—with how it moved, how it felt, and knowing what it was capable of. I was proud of the effort and the result.

Though I viewed my body as an instrument capable of hitting jump shots, breaking a press, and pulling down rebounds, there were others who viewed it much differently. Some men seemingly felt free to comment on the curve of my ass or my muscular calf muscles while I struggled to squat, clean, and snatch weights next to them on the platform. I was wearing baggy shorts just like the guy next to me, but I was too busy trying to push the weight and too focused on completing a successful lift to notice his "form." My motivation was stronger muscles, but his catcalls revealed his motivation was sex.

The gaze of others wasn't limited to men. My female coaches and teammates referred to me jokingly as "Butch." I had short hair, wore sweats daily, and spent more time with a basketball than I did with male companions. These choices were purposeful. Short hair was easier to take care of. Sweats were more comfortable and easy to take on and off in preparation for practice. As a college athlete, my motivation was to excel on the court and in the classroom. I wasn't there to land a mate. I was there to become a better shooting guard and to prepare for successful entry into graduate school. Not everyone shared my vision.

Name calling ("butch" or "dyke") was common and served a purpose. It reinforced traditional ideologies about how women should look and act. Women were expected to appear feminine. Long hair, painted nails, makeup, and dressing in feminine clothing reinforced traditional gender norms. Such behavior was expected and reinforced. When women didn't fit this heterosexual norm, their behavior and sexuality were called into question. Name calling served to remind us all of what was expected and acceptable. Those names carried meaning and fear of backlash because they challenged traditional gender ideology and the accepted heterosexual norm. As a result, my teammates and I, whether gay or straight, felt pressure to fit into these norms. Hair length is an important marker. It was often a joke that female athletes must have a "ponytail gene" because ponytails are so prevalent in women's athletics. It was also a common occurrence for my teammates and me to discuss dating men and wanting children, whether they were actually dating men or had any interest in having kids.

An example of how these expectations can impact experience occurred during one-holiday break. All students who resided in the dorms had to move out while the campus was closed for the holiday break. I was displaced from the dorms with no place to stay but had to remain on campus for practice and games. One teammate invited me to stay at her apartment since

her roommate was headed home for the break. Thankful for the offer, I took her up on the opportunity. Not until I arrived did I learn that she was gay and had invited her girlfriend to stay as well. One night, after they both had too much alcohol to drink, they applied considerable pressure on me to join them sexually. After I turned them down, my teammate's girlfriend said, "But I thought you said she was butch."

The next day at practice I shared with a male assistant coach that I thought I might need to find a new place to stay. He responded with surprise and questioned how I didn't know my teammate was gay. He then with consternation asked why I hadn't taken greater care and made a stronger effort to make it clear that although I looked "butch," I was heterosexual.

The pressure to navigate these challenges was significant and ever-present. A competitive athlete will do just about anything to be involved in her sport. We are trained not to question, but to do as we're expected and as we're told. To challenge this expected norm would mean to threaten our opportunity to play. The play is key and an athlete's most valuable commodity. Athletes' bodies are powerful, yet we don't have power. To participate we are required to concede our power to those who coach and administrate us. If we are blessed to play for people who create a safe and positive participatory environment, this concession can be empowering. However, if we play for people who abuse their power and choose actions based on immoral motivations, the results can be scarring.

An athlete wants to please. If she pleases those who evaluate, she earns the opportunity to play. She can please by working harder, pushing herself to the point of physical exhaustion. She can please by working longer hours, opening the gym in the morning and turning the lights off at night. She can please by tapping into the unknown source of physical, psychological, and emotional reserves only the subjective can explain. An athlete begins to accept these sacrifices as the norm. Soon they are not sacrifices, just another day in the pursuit of excellence. The bar continues to move and always in the direction navigated by those in power.

Powerful bodies command a presence. Powerful bodies take up space. What happens when the power inherent in an athlete's body, one finely tuned through hours of physical exertion, is diminished by the person in power who chooses to take away such space?

How I saw and experienced my body was different than how others did. I, the athlete, viewed my body as a tool for physical proficiency. While it could be manipulated through drills and physical activity, others viewed it as an object for their gaze, and as something that could be manipulated for their pleasure.

5. Suggestions for change

As I read the above vignettes, to me it is painfully obviously that women athletes appear to have much in common with the perception of beauty and the beast of application. Each of these women tells a tale of manipulation by peers, coaches, and even other participants. Their comments also reflect what has been written on the subject of hegemony and misogamy [1, 2, 5, 8]. Most researchers argue for a re-education of society to address the issues. I reached out to each of these former athletes and asked her to offer her perspective.

5.1. Nicole

Even when I played basketball in Denmark I was around athletes who were professionals and they were worried about their physical appearance and body type. When I was walking around in the town that I lived in I was constantly told that I looked like a basketball player. How do I look like a basketball player when I am walking around town while wearing jeans, boots, and a winter coat? I always wondered what made people label me as a basketball player? Similarly, in high school walking around in airports as a team, we were constantly asked if we were a volleyball team or a swim team. Why never a cheer team or a dance team? I can only assume that it was because of the “the look” that we had.

As a coach at both the NAIA level and the NCAA D-1 level I have seen first-hand how women’s basketball players have a perception of beauty that is shaped by numerous factors. They want to be strong and seen as a threat within the sport but don’t want to be “too big” when it comes to lifting weights and having muscles. They are affected by each other, and peer feedback is a huge factor in how they see beauty. They do not necessarily have a sense of modesty when it comes to being in the locker room, but they are constantly critiquing their own bodies as if they are begging for a compliment from their teammates. They compare themselves to other girls who are not athletes, who are “skinny” and don’t have to worry about being able to lift a certain amount or being stronger than an opponent. I have heard so many times “well I’m self-conscious” or “if I didn’t have these basketball legs” while girls talk in the locker room. Their distorted views of their bodies come from society, the sport itself, spectators, and unspoken pressure from coaches. The sad reality is that so many young women their age would love to have the bodies these athletes do.

Both my experiences and seeing how the athletes I coach are affected by outside factors have affected my view of beauty. Because of the sport, I played and the criticism I received as a player I see a certain body type as the “perfect body” and this view is only solidified by validation from others. I will coach much differently than how I was coached—I will see and support women to be powerful and beautiful as they are.

Upon further reflection of the experience I had at USD, I was even more concerned with my experience as a player in regard to how I was treated with my weight because I had a female coach. It struck me as so insensitive and concerning that a female in a position of power and leadership would be comfortable treating an athlete that they are coaching and supposedly mentoring in this manner. She had no concern for my overall well-being or how her comments about my weight would affect me mentally, either in the long or short term. The other concerning thing is that I was only one of many players that were treated like this. My teammates who were seniors had been treated like this and had their weight yo-yo anywhere between 150 and 180 lbs. for some of them. The way that we were treated was not right by any means, and even worse was the way that we were somehow rewarded for this behavior with praise, compliments, and in some cases, more playing time.

Comparing this situation to the situation, I am witnessing now as a graduate assistant coach is drastically different. The male coach that I work under now does not ever mention the girls’ weight or physical appearance. He had never talked about putting them on a diet, nor has he

put any restrictions on what they eat when we are on road trips. The girls are not monitored as closely as I was when I played, however, the team is aware of what they should and should not be eating. While meal preference differs from player to player, it is interesting to see how some of the freshmen have changed their eating habits since arriving in August. Have they changed their habits based on necessity and the new physical demands their bodies are going through? Or are they just modeling their eating habits after the upper classman because that is what they feel is expected? These questions always cross my mind and I often compare the situation I am witnessing now to the experience that I had as a player.

With these two extreme approaches in mind, I feel that there must be some sort of middle ground that can be reached when it comes to how female athletes should be treated and approached when it comes to weight, which is already a sensitive issue within itself. The first suggestion that I would make is that a head coach should not be the one to have a conversation with a player in regards to any weight issues. A head coach is already in a position of power that can be seen as intimidating for players, and players are already under enough stress to perform. The head coach should not be responsible for weight management or discussing these issues with a player. If at all possible, a certified nutritionist should be available to consult. This nutritionist can serve as a liaison between coach and player to discuss any matters that are concerning to a coach as far as health, weight, and diet is concerned.

Another way to prevent negative experiences for players as far as weight is concerned is to educate the players and take more preventative measures, instead of being strictly reactive. The team nutritionist could have weekly meetings with players and team meetings to educate players on how to properly fuel their bodies based on the amount of energy they are expending. This would give players a safe outlet outside of their coaching staff to talk about nutrition concerns or body image issues. Furthermore, the players would have at least some knowledge as to what food they should be consuming so they do not resort to habits or diets that could lead to eating disorders or further body image issues.

As a former player and current coach, I see now more than ever the importance of building healthy habits and a positive body image for female athletes. The media and other outlets already do a poor enough job at educating women in this field, and this problem does not need to be compounded by more negativity from coaches or other influencing parties within each athlete's athletic circle.

5.2. Lisa

The problems of beauty I experienced were based on clothing styles and comments people made about me or those in the sport of gymnastics. For me, I was not that concerned with the latest styles because I was the most comfortable in my athletic clothing. I did not see the point in getting too wrapped up in the fashion world when I had bigger goals to meet in my sport.

I did not concern myself too much with what others said about me or about my body and the sport of gymnastics. I was so connected to gymnastics. It brought me such a feeling of accomplishment and through the years it had become a big part of my identity. If others thought my body looked unfeminine then they did not understand the satisfaction, through strength and

power that I had with my body. And I successfully demonstrated that for years. Also, whether I was too big or small, I had a great deal of success in other sports I played because of my gymnastics background whether it was medaling at state track or playing on a championship softball team. When the time came to leave gymnastics, I knew I would be able to pick up another sport as a strong competitor.

Gymnastics made me feel beautiful, confident, strong, and successful. Even when the time came to let it go and move on, I knew I would always carry it with me. To this day, it still contributes to my feelings of self-worth and my desire to push through difficult challenges in life.

5.3. Heather

Athletes have powerful bodies, but do we, as beings, have power? How one comes to understand her own beauty is heavily influenced by perceptions of others. Those whose opinions matter are often people who are in a position of power. If the opportunity to play exists in a safe and positive space, the benefits to engagement in sport are numerous and well documented. But if the play experience exists in a negative and harmful environment, the impact of the experience can be devastating. If a person in a position of power (e.g., a coach, an athletic director, a judge, etc.) believes that perceived beauty is a reflection of personal worth, this message can be detrimental and damaging to a young woman still seeking to find herself. The need to please in the pursuit of playing time can mean athletes may adopt unhealthy behaviors to reach an imposed end goal related to weight or appearance.

Athletes must be change agents in creating, supporting, and facilitating safe and positive participatory spaces. The culture of athletics has long been argued as a heteronormative, hyper-masculine environment. The truth is athletes are athletes, regardless of their sex or gender. Athletes, male and female, must demand change. No longer can it be acceptable for the use of language that demeans, belittles, and strips power. No longer can it be acceptable for people to take space that isn't theirs to claim. Athletes must hold themselves, each other, and their coaches and administrators responsible for their choices.

They do this through solidarity in numbers. For example, it is common practice for teams to set goals at the beginning of every season. Goals should include intentional efforts to create safe and healthy playing environments where athletes and coaches agree to support, rather than belittle, one another. Additionally, team members must commit to holding each other accountable to safe and healthy interactions. If teammates begin to police one another's word choices and actions, the participatory culture will change to be supportive.

An additional consideration is utilizing the services of a sport psychologist. Doing so will allow players and coaches access to a trained professional whose focus is on building a cohesive and supportive competitive unit. Additionally, a sport psychologist can work with individual team members on strategies to improve self-concept and self-esteem. If an athlete finds herself struggling with issues related to image or weight, a trained professional can help an athlete get the help she needs to make healthy decisions.

Being excellent requires preparation with others also seeking to be excellent. To become the best, you must give your best. To become the best, you must train with those who can push you to excel. However, people can only give their best when the environment allows it. An environment which demeans, belittles and strips power will never allow for one's best efforts to be practiced and supported. To truly become the best, we have to allow others the opportunity to become better.

6. Final thoughts

I am not sure that the beast of the sport—the ugliness of how people treat each other—is limited to sport. Lisa's story is more about other girls in school rather than experiences within the sport. I was always a big girl and even had a relative or two say hurtful things like, you are so pretty, too bad you are so fat. I even had an uncle call me the little fat girl from Marshallville. Society is hurtful, people are hurtful, and words have to mean [9].

The first step in making change is to inform and to share stories with others. This chapter is one of those first beginnings to an audience outside of the sport academic community. Title IX has brought sports participation to women in the United States, and more women today participate in athletics and sport than at any other time in the past [16].

Unfortunately, participation in sport is one of the few places in education and life where moral rules of society appear to be on hold. Stoll and colleagues have shown over a 25 span that moral reasoning and moral development of athletes, coaches, and fans appears to be masked when participating [10–13, 17, 18]. Rudd [19] asked 108 athletes of how often they were insulted or harassed by spectators; 47.2% said they had been insulted. Interestingly when pressed as to how hurtful the harassment was, the athletes appeared to say it had little to no affect on their playing though 17.6% felt the comments were hurtful. As Heather said and Lisa and Nicole supported, beauty lies in the strength of the athlete and the power of the athletic endeavor—and that's where we should all perceive the importance of beauty. Our comments about beauty are supported by Krane [4] who argued athletes know how to be "pretty" in a societal sense, but do athletes really want to deal with societal perception? Women today in athletics have more opportunity than in the past to participate and excel both in and out of sport. However, the beauty and the beast still exist in. We should take their suggestions to heart and make a difference so that the beast is laid to rest.

Author details

Sharon K. Stoll^{1*}, Heather VanMullem², Nicole Ballester² and Lisa Brown²

*Address all correspondence to: ssoll@uidaho.edu

¹ University of Idaho, Moscow, ID, USA

² Lewis-Clark State College, Lewiston, ID, USA

References

- [1] Muscat AC, Long BC. Critical comments about body shape and weight: Disordered eating of female athletes and sport participants. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*. 2008;**20**(1):1-24
- [2] Crissey SR, Honea JC. The relationship between athletic participation and perceptions of body size and weight control in adolescent girls: The role of sport type. *Sociology of Sport Journal*. 2006;**23**(3):248-272
- [3] Ryan J. *Little Girls in Pretty Boxes*. New York: Doubleday; 2013
- [4] Krane V. We can be athletic and feminine, but do we want to? Challenging hegemonic femininity in women's sport. *Quest*. 2001;**53**(1):115-133. DOI: 10.1080/00336297.2001.10491733
- [5] Messner, M. A. Sports and male domination: The female athlete as contested ideological terrain. *Sport Sociology Journal*. 1988;**5**:197-211
- [6] Griffin P. *Strong Women, Deep Closets*. Champaign-Urbana: Human Kinetics; 1992
- [7] Festle MJ. *Playing Nice: Politics and Apologies in Women's Sports*. New York: Columbia Press; 1996
- [8] Adams N, Schmitke A, Franklin A. Tomboys, Dykes, and girly girls: Interrogating the subjectivities of adolescent female athletes. *Women's Studies Quarterly*. 2005;**33**(1&2):17-34
- [9] Dixon, N. On winning and athletic superiority. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*. 1999; **26**(1):10-26
- [10] Stoll S. Social justice: An historical and philosophical perspective. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance*. 2011;**82**(8):36-39
- [11] Stoll S. Athletics: The good it should do. *Journal of College and Character*. 2011;**12**(4)
- [12] Beller J, Stoll S. A moral reasoning intervention program for division-I athletes. *Athletic Academic Journal*. 1992;**21**:43-57
- [13] Beller J, Stoll S. Moral reasoning of high school student athletes and general students: An empirical study versus personal testimony. *Pediatric Exercise Science*. 1995;**7**:352-363
- [14] Lumpkin A, Stoll S, Beller J. *Sport ethics: Applications for Fair Play*. St Louis: McGraw-Hill; 2003
- [15] Lumpkin A, Stoll S, Beller J. *Practical Sport Ethics*. NC: McFarland Press; 2011
- [16] Acosta RV, Carpenter LJ. *Women in Intercollegiate Sport: A Longitudinal, National Study: Thirty-five Year Update*. 1977-2012. Brooklyn College. Acosta/Carpenter Web site; 2012
- [17] Beller J, Stoll S, Hansen D. Four-year longitudinal study of character development in high school sport. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport (Supplement Abstracts)*. 2004;**75**(1): A-96-A-97

- [18] Rudd A, Stoll S, Beller M. Expressed coaching behavior and its effect on athlete moral development. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport (Supplement Abstracts)*. 1997; **79**(1):A-84-A-89
- [19] Rudd A. Sport Spectator Behavior as a Moral Issue in College Sport. *Journal of Amateur Sport*. In Press

